



Concordia
UNIVERSITY

The Eric O'Connor Series

WORD MADE FLESH?

Re-Shaping Our City

March 7, 8, and 9, 1995

The purpose of this event is to explore the question: What are we communicating today Through our cities and our urban lifestyle? In the context of the diminishing power of the word to communicate meaning and values, we find ourselves within a crisis of culture without a common ground to understand one another and thereby come to terms with what we are living in Montréal. How can we learn to engage in meaningful conversation in the nineties? Words become flat and fragmentary; they operate in a uni-dimensional self-referential world. Flesh, understood as a human way of inhabiting space and time has meaning and is one with the spiritual and transcendent. However, today flesh has taken on an excessive dimension which creates static and thereby distorting this channel of meaning and unity.

We wish the event to be a forum where faculty, students and the public will dialogue on the question of how meaning is expressed in the creation of architecture, literature and electronic media. The focus of the inquiry will be what shapes the city and its dwellers

The phrase "word made flesh" finds its origins in Christianity. It expresses the belief that the invisible God became visible. The whole is present in the fragment. From that moment onwards, all human images become capable of expressing the eternal. The history of Christianity can be seen as a restless quest for finding ever new ways of expressing this new norm of communication.

The format will be interactive by exploring the question and calling for participants' reflection on the experience. It is our hope that positive and negative aspects of creative power – to give life as well as to destroy will be considered.

1) **Architecture.** The domestic space. The public space. The commercial realm. How the modes and codes of architectural expression enunciate meanings and values. Modernism and its breakdown. Use of slides and films.

2) **Literature.** Poetry, the novel, word, the world. The false voice, the fantasy. Readings by poets, novelist and playwrights of their works. A self reflection on the rigors, successes and failures of the wordsmith.

3) **Audio/Visual.** Super saturation. Over-whelming of the senses. Comfort and reassuring narcotics out of context with the lived world. Video, film and sound presentations exposing the extent, limitations and biases of this energetic exercise of our contemporary culture.